

CULTURE WARS

*Secular–Catholic Conflict in
Nineteenth-Century Europe*

edited by
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CHAPTER I

The New Catholicism and the European culture wars

Christopher Clark

The history of Catholic societies in nineteenth-century Europe was marked by the paradoxical intertwining of two transformative processes: secularisation and religious revival. On the one hand, church properties were seized and sold off; ecclesiastical privileges were removed; clerical authorities came under pressure to retreat from their positions in education and charitable provision; and liberal, national, radical and socialist political discourses were marked by an uncompromisingly anticlerical rhetoric. At the same time, however, this era saw a flowering of Catholic religious life across Europe. There was a proliferation and elaboration of popular devotions, church buildings, religious foundations and associations, and confessionally motivated newspapers and journals. This revitalisation of religious energies coincided with profound changes within the church itself. The New Catholicism of later nineteenth-century Europe was more uniform, more centralised, and more 'Roman' than the eighteenth-century church had been. It was marked by a convergence of elite and popular devotions, an interpenetration of lay and clerical organisation, a rhetorical vehemence and a resourcefulness in the management of communicative media that impressed contemporaries, whether sympathetic or hostile.

These transformations were a crucial precondition for the 'culture wars' that polarised European societies in the later nineteenth century. There had always been intermittent friction and conflict between church and state in western Europe. But the all-encompassing ideological and political struggles of the later nineteenth century would have been inconceivable had the church not acquired the means to mobilise its support base and to mount effective campaigns against its adversaries. This chapter thus focuses on the developments that shaped the New Catholicism of nineteenth-century Europe and defined the character of the battles it fought. In doing so, it aims to get to grips with two general problems.

I would like to thank Professor D. E. D. Beales, Professor Olaf Blaschke, Dr Nina Lübben and Dr John A. Thompson for their comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

The first concerns the dynamics of change within European Catholicism as a social and cultural system. Where did the pressure for change come from? Did it originate with Rome and feed down through the hierarchy via the 'papalist' orders, as some accounts would suggest, or were forces on the periphery also involved? Were the changes clerically led, or were autonomous lay impulses also implicated? While acknowledging the impact of the initiatives launched by the curia, this chapter argues that the external pressures brought to bear on Catholic networks and communities across Europe throughout the century generated parallel processes of lay and clerical mobilisation that in turn created potentially destabilising cross-currents within the Catholic system. The campaign waged by the curia to secure central control, give 'Catholicism' a stable and clearly defined ideological content and homogenise Catholic devotional and associational cultures was in part driven by the need to capture and contain these currents. The 'Romanisation' of nineteenth-century Catholicism was thus a rather less tidy process than is implied by those contemporary anticlerical images of fanatically obedient Jesuits herding servile Catholic masses that are discussed in Wolfram Kaiser's contribution to this book.

Our second problem concerns the relationship between the developments underway within the Catholic camp and broader processes of historical change. Contemporary liberal and anticlerical publicists framed the culture wars as a struggle between 'modernity' and a reactionary, backward-looking worldview that had no legitimate place in a modern society. To a striking degree, an implicit antinomy between modernity and 'tradition' still informs the way we think about this conflict.¹ One of the reasons for this is that the teleological, secular concept of 'progress' celebrated by the nineteenth-century liberals lives on in the 'modernisation theory' whose assumptions have underwritten some of the best writing on the European history of this era. The days are long past when historians conceived of modernisation in terms of a linear decline in religion, but there is still a tendency to view the phenomenon of religious revival as a detour, a distraction, from the 'norm' of an irreversible process of secularisation. As a consequence, the history of Catholic revival and mobilisation becomes wholly or partly detached from the history of European modernity, as if it

¹ On this problem, see David Blackbourn, 'Progress and Piety: Liberals, Catholics and the State in Bismarck's Germany', in David Blackbourn, *Populists and Patricians. Essays in Modern German History* (London, 1987), 143–67; and David Blackbourn, 'The Catholic Church in Europe Since the French Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33 (1991), 778–90. For a trenchant example of the persistence of 'backwardness' as a way of thinking about nineteenth-century Catholicism, see Oded Heilbrunner, 'From Ghetto to Ghetto: The Place of German Catholic Society in Recent Historiography', *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 453–95.

inhabited a simultaneous but parallel universe. Catholic mobilisation and societal modernisation are seen as antipathetic and mutually undermining principles; the one's gain is the other's loss.

This chapter takes issue with the view that the culture wars amounted to a stand-off between 'regression' or 'tradition' on the one hand, and the forces of 'modernity' on the other. Liberalism, anticlericalism and socialist secularism were all artefacts of political modernity, but so was the New Catholicism, with its networks of voluntary associations, newspapers, mass-produced imagery and mass demonstrations. Like its contemporaries, socialism and nationalism, the New Catholicism was deeply implicated in that epochal sharpening of collective identities that reshaped political cultures across Europe. The political universe we now inhabit is not the outgrowth of any one of these antagonists alone, but the consequence of an intermittently acrimonious but ultimately fruitful argument among them. For the fundamental problem that faced all the great ideological formations of late nineteenth-century Europe was not whether to embrace or reject 'modernity' but how best to respond to the challenges it posed. The relationship between the New Catholicism and its various antagonists should thus rather be seen in terms of competing programmes for the management of rapid political and social change.

REVIVAL

The religious revival of the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century followed a nadir in the fortunes of the church. The Enlightenment had seen a secularisation in literary tastes, the expulsion of the Jesuits from many European states and their subsequent suppression (under pressure) by the pope himself. At the same time, there were strivings in many parts of the episcopate in central and western Europe for 'national' ecclesiastical autonomy and – especially in the Habsburg Monarchy during the 1780s – a dramatic escalation of state interference in the management of church resources. The era of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars brought waves of wholesale secularisation, the suppression of many religious foundations, the abolition of the ecclesiastical principalities and the imposition in many states of more extensive regimes of control and supervision over ecclesiastical activities.

The early and middle decades of the nineteenth century nevertheless saw a massive expansion of confessional commitment among the Catholic populations of Europe and the emergence of a more cohesive and Rome-centred clergy. There was a spectacular rise in the numbers of persons entering holy orders and a proliferation of new religious houses, evangelising

missions and devotional associations. Many areas witnessed a sharp and sustained upswing in the rate of lay observance. There was a surge in popular pilgrimages to established and new holy sites. The era of growth and revitalisation was associated with the rapid diffusion of a mode of piety marked inwardly by an emphasis on mystery, miracle and immediacy of experience, and outwardly by a partiality for highly demonstrative – even provocative – collective acts of devotion. These developments unfolded on a scale that dwarfed the incipient revivals of the late Enlightenment.

In some ways, the blows dealt out to ecclesiastical institutions and personnel during the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras and sporadically across Europe thereafter may actually have laid the ground for the later revival. The trauma of revolution and de-Christianisation in France shaped the contours of the subsequent revival, polarising communities around the choice between collaboration and resistance and generating more ‘baroque’ and communally based forms of piety than had been the norm at the end of the *ancien régime*.² The ‘Organic Articles’ imposed unilaterally by the French administration as a supplement to the Concordat of 1801 and subsequently imitated in other European states, were conceived with the chief aim of subordinating clerical structures to state control. But they also had the effect, through the introduction of standardised training and state-subsidised salaries, of creating a more cohesive and integrated clergy. By seeking to confine the activity of the clergy to its core religious functions and redistributing church incomes towards parochial provision, secularising regimes encouraged the development of more close-knit relationships between the clergy and the faithful. The confiscation and resale of ecclesiastical property and the abolition of the old ecclesiastical principalities had an analogous effect, since it narrowed what had once been a vast wealth gap between the upper and lower clergy.³ Confiscations also worked in favour of a more Rome-dominated clergy, since they undermined the autonomy of the great French and German bishoprics whose incumbents had

² M. Vovelle, *The Revolution Against the Church: From Reason to the Supreme Being* (Cambridge, 1991); S. Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred. Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (Ithaca, 1990); O. Hufton, ‘The Reconstruction of a Church 1796–1801’, in C. Lucas and G. Lewis, *Beyond the Terror: Essays in French Regional and Social History 1794–1815* (Cambridge, 1983).

³ I am indebted to Hazel Mills for sharing with me her unpublished research on Catholic revival in the French regions. On the other issues raised, see R. Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789–1914* (London, 1989), 78–80; D. Beales, ‘Joseph II and the Monasteries of Austria and Hungary’, in N. Aston (ed.), *Religious Change in Europe, 1650–1914* (Oxford 1997), 161–84, here 162; on the wealth gap, J. McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (London, 1969), 18, 39; J. McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. I: *The Clerical Establishment and its Social Ramifications* (Oxford, 1998), 216–17, 308, 332–46. On the popular impact of secularising measures: C. M. Naselli, *La soppressione napoleonica delle corporazioni religiose. Contributo alla storia religiosa del primo ottocento italiano 1808–1814* (Rome, 1986), 203–5.

traditionally been so resistant to encroachments from the curia. These indirect stimuli to revival were supplemented in some states after 1815 by 'restorative' measures whose purpose was to encourage the expansion of clerical activity – especially missions – as a means of legitimating authority and neutralising political discontent.

These enabling conditions are well known, but the phenomenon of revival itself remains elusive. When exactly did it start? Did it take off in the 1850s, as some historians have argued? Was it already underway in the 1830s, or did it perhaps involve the gradual consolidation of a process of renewal that was already in evidence at the end of the eighteenth century?⁴ Particularly difficult is the question of the balance of forces driving religious revival. Was it clerically inspired, or did it bubble up unbidden from below? Were the faithful 'mobilised' by the clergy, or was clerical activism 'demand-driven'? The complexities that beset any effort to answer this question can be illustrated by reference to one of the most celebrated manifestations of Catholic mass devotion in the post-Napoleonic era, the Trier pilgrimage of 1844. In the space of a few weeks, some 500,000 Catholic pilgrims converged on the city of Trier (population *c.* 20,000), lured by the opportunity to view and venerate the robe reputed by local tradition to have been worn by Christ until his crucifixion. The pilgrimage demonstrated, among other things, the enhanced authority of the clergy among the masses of the faithful – whereas late eighteenth-century pilgrimages had tended to be anarchic,

⁴ Emmet Larkin's influential analysis of devotional revival in Ireland after 1850 ('The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–1875', *American Historical Review* 77 (1972), 625–52) has been much challenged; see, e.g., T. K. Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984), 171, 173, 197–211, which argues that revival was well underway by 1850. Historians of German Catholicism likewise disagree over the periodisation of revival: J. Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton, N.J., 1984) favours the 1850s and 1860s, whereas Christoph Weber, *Aufklärung und Orthodoxie am Mittelrhein, 1820–1850* (Munich, 1973) and M. L. Anderson, 'Piety and Politics: Recent Work on German Catholicism', *Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991), 681–716, both date the beginnings of revival to the 1830s and 1840s. Over the last two decades, a revisionist historiography has shown that the image of the late Enlightenment as a period of helter-skelter retreat for Catholicism is misleading. Louis Chatellier and others have argued that this period saw an expansion of missionary activity, through which 'Catholicism became, more than it ever had been, a mass phenomenon', especially among rural populations. In the 1760s and 1770s, there was a new wave of popular devotions and cults – to the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Virgin, or around the person of the pious illiterate mendicant Benoît Labre, popularly acclaimed as a saint on his death in Rome in 1783. In this era, as later, these devotions received papal support and women played a prominent role in consolidating them in popular practice. Yet the impact of these trends upon the church as a whole remained limited, partly because of ambivalence and institutional rivalries among the lesser clergy and partly because of the profound distrust and distaste with which an influential sector of the European episcopate viewed such manifestations of popular piety. For samples of this literature, see L. Chatellier (ed.), *Religions en transition dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Voltaire Foundation Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 2000: 02), (Oxford, 2000), esp. 74, 138, 230. A useful brief overview of some of the issues raised by Catholic revival is D. Blackburn, 'The Catholic Church in Europe since the French Revolution'.

ill-disciplined affairs, the Trier pilgrims appeared in well-ordered ranks, under the supervision of their priests.

In a classic account of these events, the German historian Wolfgang Schieder discerned in the Trier pilgrimage evidence of a counter-revolutionary alliance between Catholic clergy and the Prussian authorities, whose purpose was to 'channel' latent social discontents into a politically harmless act of collective devotion. According to this view, the role of the clergy was essentially manipulative.⁵ By contrast, others have highlighted the popular dimension of the Trier pilgrimage. Many of the parish clergy were themselves 'representatives of the people' in the sense that they hailed from families of humble status, and enthusiasm for this demonstrative act of collective veneration drew on widespread Rhenish Catholic hostility towards the Protestant administration of the kingdom of Prussia. Pilgrimages had in any case traditionally been more popular with the people than with the clergy, who had tended to see them as occasions for disorder and misbehaviour.⁶

These viewpoints reflect divergent emphases and perspectives in the historiography,⁷ but they are not mutually exclusive. Clerical initiatives were crucial to the organisational boom that occurred within European Catholicism during the middle decades of the century. But they were not imposed upon an unwilling populace. Indeed they could only succeed by tapping and responding to 'popular' demand. In France, where there has been much detailed research on revival in the localities, it is clear that the new devotional culture was substantially lay-driven and that women often played a prominent role. In some areas, new venerations even flourished despite the scepticism of the local clergy. In the small town of Arbois in the Jura, for example, a group of laywomen revived a religious association (Dames de Charité) without any support whatsoever from the local priest, a former revolutionary juror.⁸ It has long been acknowledged that German

⁵ W. Schieder, 'Kirche und Revolution. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der trierer Wallfahrt von 1844', in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (1974), 419–54.

⁶ Rudolf Lill, 'Kirche und Revolution. Zu den Anfängen der katholischen Bewegung im Jahrzehnt vor 1848', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 18 (1978), 565–75; Andreas Holzem, *Kirchenreform und Sektienstiftung. Deutschkatholiken, Reformkatholiken und Ultramontane am Oberrhein (1844–1866)* (Paderborn, 1994), 6, 13–17.

⁷ Sperber (*Popular Catholicism*) sees the western German revival as essentially clerically driven; Emmett Larkin ('Devotional Revolution'), likewise, stresses the role of the hierarchy (esp. Cullen), in stimulating Irish revival. For contrasting views that see the activism of the clergy more as a 'symptom' than an 'agent' of revival, see M. L. Anderson, 'The Limits of Secularisation: On the Problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany', *Historical Journal* 38 (1995), 647–70; Hoppen, *Elections*, 173, 211.

⁸ I am grateful to Hazel Mills for drawing my attention to the Dames de Charité in Arbois.

Catholic revival after 1850 owed much to the remarkable expansion in missionary activity by the Jesuit, Redemptorist and Franciscan orders in the German states. But here too demand preceded supply: already during the pre-March, when the government of Baden and Prussia prohibited such missions on their territory, it had been common for western German Catholics to travel across the borders in order to attend missionary events in Alsace and Belgium. The same pattern can be observed in the rapid spread of 'May venerations' of the Virgin across Catholic Europe between the 1820s and the 1850s. The May venerations were propagated in many areas by local religious houses, but such was their popularity that some parochial clergy were obliged to introduce them under pressure from their congregations. The proliferation of such devotions was thus a somewhat haphazard process that depended less upon impulses from the senior clergy than upon local conditions. Where parish priests were flexible enough to cater to demand from the community, the resulting success was often sufficient to trigger emulation from clergy and faithful in nearby areas.⁹

What was significant, then, about the Trier pilgrimage and other such acts of collective devotion in the post-Napoleonic era was not the imposition of clerical control as such, but a potent convergence of clerical activism at many levels with a revitalised popular piety, a 'rediscovery' as one historian has put it, of Catholic popular religion.¹⁰ One of the most interesting features of nineteenth-century Catholic revival is the extent to which it drew on extra-sacerdotal forms of worship and experience – pilgrimage, rosarial devotions, visionary encounters with divine persons.¹¹ Another distinctive feature was the rise of certain formerly local cults to integrative, supra-regional devotions with a mass base.¹²

⁹ O. Weiss, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern (1790–1909). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ultramontanismus* (St Ottilien, 1983); Kurt Küppers, 'Die Maiandacht als Beispiel volksnaher Frömmigkeit', *Römische Quartalschrift* 81 (1986), 102–12, here 104.

¹⁰ Antonius Liedhegener, *Christentum und Urbanisierung. Katholiken und Protestanten in Münster und Bochum 1830–1933* (Paderborn, 1997), 103–6, 570. Other historians who emphasise the importance of popular piety (as opposed to clerical leadership) to the cohesion of the German Catholic milieu include Josef Mooser, 'Katholische Volksreligion, Klerus und Bürgertum in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Thesen', in W. Schieder (ed.), *Religion und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1993), 144–56 and Siegfried Weichlein, 'Konfession und Region: Katholische Milieubildung am Beispiel Fuldas', in O. Blaschke and F.-M. Kuhlemann (eds.), *Religion im Kaiserreich. Milieus, Mentalitäten, Krisen* (Gütersloh, 1996), 193–232. On the same phenomenon in Spain, see William J. Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain, 1750–1874* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 231–6.

¹¹ Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy. The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1975* (Oxford, 1987), 22–3, 28–9; Ruth Harris, *Lourdes. Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London, 1999); David Blackburn, *Marpingen. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford, 1993).

¹² Olaf Blaschke, 'Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000), 38–75, here 45.

Ordinary Catholics were ‘subjects’, not just ‘objects’ of the new devotional culture that resulted.¹³ The same point could be made with regard to the dramatic growth of women’s congregations, which was driven by the aspiration of many peasant and working-class women to participate in the work of new communities of ‘sisters’ whose commitment to social action distinguished them from the enclosed orders of contemplative nuns that had been the norm under the *ancien régime*. ‘Religious life’, as Theodore K. Hoppen has observed, ‘does not change merely in response to Episcopal command. Revolutions in outlook and behaviour, in practice and belief, depend ultimately upon deeper shifts in the practices of a community and in the relationships within it.’¹⁴ For these reasons, it is perhaps unhelpful to conceptualise revival around a dichotomy between clerical and lay initiative. In many localities, the clergy was itself divided – some supporting the new emotive devotional culture, while others kept their distance. Our conclusions on these matters must in any case remain tentative. The historiography of Catholic revival remains extremely patchy – we still know much more about clerical activism than we do about popular religiosity and much work is still to be done, both on the local roots of the new devotional trends, and on the networks that allowed new or revived practices to consolidate themselves at regional, national and European level.

THE ASCENDANCY OF ROME

Although it would be mistaken to see the upswing in popular devotions in terms of the systematic implementation of a policy concept emanating from Rome, it is nonetheless clear that the new trend was closely associated with the increasingly Roman orientation of the clergy and of the faithful more generally. The ‘papalist’ orders – especially the Jesuits – were prominently involved in the propagation of the May devotions and of the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which in turn was closely linked, after 1859, with the cause of the pope in his struggle with the Italian state. Furthermore, endorsements from the papacy were crucial in providing new and revived devotions – and the associations that supported them – with a secure place in the life of the church.¹⁵ The popes also played a central role in supporting the spread of Marian devotions. The most dramatic example of a papal

¹³ See N. Busch, ‘Fromme Westfalen. Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte des Herz-Jesu-Kultes zwischen Kulturkampf und Erstem Weltkrieg’, *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 144 (1984), 329–50, here 348.

¹⁴ Hoppen, *Elections*, 211.

¹⁵ Busch, ‘Fromme Westfalen’, 329–50, here 332; for other examples of papal support for pious associations, see also O. Heim, *Die katholischen Vereine im deutsch-sprachigen Österreich 1848–1855* (Salzburg, 1990), 113, 163, 173, 175, 203, 223.

intervention along these lines was the definition by Pius IX on 8 December 1854 of the Immaculate Conception of Mary as Catholic doctrine. This initiative was marked by a dialectical interlocking of curial authority with popular aspirations that was characteristic for the mid-century papacy. On the one hand, the declaration signalled a qualitative leap in the pope's capacity to exercise doctrinal authority without formal consultation of his bishops – in this respect, the declaration of 1854 foreshadowed the later formal promulgation of papal infallibility. On the other hand, the Immaculate Conception had long been a popular devotional theme among Catholics in Europe and Pius IX made extensive enquiries into the state of Catholic opinion before proceeding to define it as dogma.¹⁶

The 'Romanisation' of the nineteenth-century church was a complex process that was driven at different levels by a range of internal and external pressures. Some have seen it as an essentially coercive enterprise, in which dissenting clergy were disciplined, discriminated against and hounded from positions of influence.¹⁷ There is something to be said for this perspective. The curia certainly supported that loose network of 'ultramontane' Catholic clerical and lay activists who championed the rights of Rome over those both of the state and of the 'national' church hierarchies and it also made use of all available resources to discredit, isolate and sabotage the opposing camp.¹⁸

Yet a top-down paradigm can only partially capture the complexity of the process. The career of the ultramontane movement throughout Europe indicates that powerful voluntarist forces were at work. Ultramontanism profited, for example, from the remarkable surge in female religious vocations that accompanied the mid-century Catholic revival.¹⁹ The curia

¹⁶ On Immaculate Conception, see Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes 1830–1914* (Oxford, 1998), 119–23; G. Martina, *Pio IX (1867–1878)* (Rome, 1990), 118; Roger Aubert, Johannes Beckmann, Patrick J. Corish and Rudolf Lill, *The Church in the Age of Liberalism*, trans. Peter Becker (London, 1981), 307; on the populist dimension of the new doctrine, see also T. Kselman, *Miracles, Magic and Prophecy in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York, 1983).

¹⁷ In addition to the studies cited above in n. 5, see I. Götz von Olenhusen, *Klerus und abweichendes Verhalten. Zur Sozialgeschichte katholischer Priester im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Erzdiözese Freiburg* (Göttingen, 1994), 21.

¹⁸ The term 'ultramontane' (literally 'beyond the mountains' refers to those Catholics in northern, central and western Europe who looked beyond the Alps towards Rome for leadership and authority. The validity of the term as a historical category is questioned in C. Weber, 'Ultramontanismus als katholischer Fundamentalismus', in W. Loth (ed.), *Deutscher Katholizismus im Umbruch zur Moderne* (Stuttgart, 1991), 20–45, here 20, 36. However, Weber's proposal that the term 'fundamentalism' be adopted in place of ultramontanism also raises problems, and his remains a minority view.

¹⁹ There is a substantial and growing literature on the role of women in Catholic revival; see, for example, C. Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Washington D.C., 1988); C. Langlois, *Le catholicisme au féminin. Les congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984); I. Götz von Olenhusen (ed.), *Wunderbare Erscheinungen. Frauen und Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 1995).

might, as in mid-century Ireland, be drawn into a more interventionist role by conflicts within the episcopate and appeals to Rome for arbitration. In many areas, it was above all the younger, lesser or rural clergy who mobilised around the ultramontane agenda against an older generation of enlightened, Jansenist, Gallican or Febronian churchmen whose political and ecclesiastical formation dated back to the closing years of the eighteenth century. The movement thus drew at least some of its energy from tensions generated by deep social and institutional cleavages within the clergy.²⁰

The spread of ultramontanism was also assisted by factors external to the church and beyond its control. Aggressive intervention by the state, for example, could trigger a collective reorientation towards Rome. In 1841–3, when the liberal government of Spain set about creating a national church under state control, prompting a formal protest from Gregory XVI, the consequence was a wave of outrage articulated in the battle cry ‘Rome is our goal! Rome is our hope!’ and an unprecedented ultramontane mobilisation among the parochial clergy.²¹ The same pattern could be observed in the Prussian Rhineland during the 1830s, where a clash between the Prussian authorities and the archbishop of Cologne triggered not only mass protest demonstrations in the city, but also a dramatic and lasting mobilisation of Romanist allegiances, manifested in the rapid proliferation of ultramontane journals and newspapers throughout the Rhineland.²² Even where it did not culminate in such dramatic conflict, interference by state administrations in the internal affairs of the church tended to have a polarising effect on the clergy, since it opened a divide – sometimes embittered by careerist rivalries – between those clerics who were inclined to collaborate in, or stood to benefit from, state initiatives and those who opposed them on the grounds that they endangered the autonomy of the church.²³

Ultramontane views also enjoyed widespread support among lay European Catholics. In this connection it is important to remember that ultramontanism was a ‘broad church’ that embraced a range of constituencies.

²⁰ Götz von Olenhusen has shown that ultramontanism in Baden was supported above all by clergy from rural backgrounds, *Klerus*, 133, 136–7; on the generational structure of ultramontanism within the Rhenish clergy, see Liedhegener, *Christentum*, 126, Holzem, *Kirchenreform*, 200; on ultramontanism in France as a movement of protest against bishops, see Roger Aubert, *Le pontificat de Pie IX (1846–1878)* (Paris, 1963), 343. For a powerful concise rejoinder to top-down interpretations of ultramontanism, see M. L. Anderson, ‘The Limits of Secularization: On the Problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany’, *Historical Journal* 38 (1995), 647–70; esp. 655–6.

²¹ Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain*, 169–72; also Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy*, 2; S. J. Payne, *Spanish Catholicism. An Historical Overview* (Madison, 1984), 98.

²² Bernhard Schneider, *Katholiken auf den Barrikaden? Europäische Revolutionen und deutsche Katholische Presse 1815–1848* (Paderborn, 1998), 52–4; Aubert *et al.*, *Church*, 32, 53–6.

²³ Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain*, 169; Chadwick, *Popes*, 163–4.

At one end of the spectrum were reactionary integralists like Louis Veillot, whose worldview was essentially absolutist and theocratic; at the other were those lay and clerical progressives for whom the ultramontane cause was consonant to some degree with liberal principles and denoted the emancipation of an international church from oppressive state control. As Owen Chadwick has observed, the central ‘paradox’ of ultramontanism was that ‘an authoritarian pope could be invoked in the interest of the “liberty” of Catholics in the face of state interference’.²⁴ A state that pressed the church hard naturally strengthened the hand of the ultramontanes, since it alienated observant Catholics from those (anti-ultramontane) elements within the senior clergy who favoured a far-reaching accommodation to the demands of secular governments.²⁵

Finally, the ultramontane tendency drew on a powerful – and arguably unprecedented – allegiance among many European Catholics to the person of the pontiff. Devotions to the person of the pope first gained ground during the pontificates of Pius VI and Pius VII, when they were triggered by indignation at the harassment of the church authorities by a succession of anticlerical regimes. Their apogee came during the pontificate of Pius IX, when the annexation of the northern Papal States by the Kingdom of Piedmont/Italy and the reduction of the pope’s temporal domains to a rump territory around Rome triggered outrage among Catholics. A wave of addresses to the pope followed, gathering 5,524,373 signatures. Although there was some covert encouragement from papal representatives, this mass demonstration of sympathy was largely spontaneous. Among the most dramatic expressions of Catholic solidarity with the pontiff was the revival – on a voluntary basis – of the levy known in the Middle Ages as the ‘Peter’s Pence’ (*deniers de Saint-Pierre*, *Peterspfennig*, *obolo di San Pietro*). This movement appears to have begun in 1859 when a Catholic journal in London reported that an Italian and a Pole resident in the city had sent a modest sum of money to offset the military costs incurred in defending the integrity of the Papal States. The gesture was widely imitated by lay Catholics, first in Vienna and Austria, then in Germany and later in France

²⁴ Chadwick, *Popes*, 38–9; Martina, *Pio IX (1867–1878)*, 131–2; Bruno Horaist, *La dévotion au pape et les catholiques français sous le pontificat de Pie IX (1846–1878) d’après les archives de la Bibliothèque Apostolique Vaticane* (Rome, 1995), 17; Harris, *Lourdes*, 118–28; Klaus Schatz, *Vaticanism I, 1869–1870*, 2 vols. (Paderborn, 1992), vol. I: *Vor der Eröffnung*, 21–2.

²⁵ In Switzerland, for example, pressure from this quarter in the early 1870s had the effect of closing down internal Catholic debate on infallibility and consolidating support for the line adopted at Vatican I. Urs Altermatt, *Der Weg der schweizer Katholiken ins Ghetto. Die Entstehungsgeschichte der nationalen Volksorganisationen im Schweizer Katholizismus 1848–1919*, 2nd edn (Zurich, 1991), 58.

and Belgium.²⁶ Although the Peter's Pence movement was encouraged by elements of the ultramontane clergy and by ultramontane press organs, it was driven above all by a spontaneous wave of lay activism in which women played a prominent role. Papalist voluntarism took other forms as well – Catholic military volunteers flocked to join the Zouave army of the pope during the 1860s, there were successive waves of mass petitions supporting the pope in his struggle with the Kingdom of Italy and there was a surge in pilgrimages to the Holy See, especially after the seizure of Lazio and Rome in 1870.²⁷

Ultramontane²⁸ propaganda sought to amplify and exploit this groundswell of support. After the events of 1870, an entire literature was dedicated to recounting in detail the suffering and 'poverty' of the pope. Many faithful Catholics responded to this message with imaginative acts of generosity, as this passage from a letter composed in 1877 by a Parisian woman demonstrates:

Permit your humble daughter, Holy Father, to offer You a little underclothing intended for your personal use: I have heard harrowing details of the deprivations of Your Holiness in this regard! and I am happy to alleviate your distress!²⁹

Ultramontane clergy and publicists sought not only to fashion solidarity out of outrage, but also to invest the person of the pope with an emblematic status. Catholics were encouraged to see in the suffering, despoliation, 'imprisonment' and 'martyrdom' of the pontiff the embodiment of the troubles currently afflicting the church. The pope's intransigence in negotiations with the Kingdom of Italy was likened to Christ's steadfastness in the face of Satan's blandishments. There was even a widespread tendency to equate the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the person of the 'suffering' pontiff.³⁰

²⁶ On the wave of addresses in 1859, see Vincent Viaene, 'The Roman Question. Catholic Mobilisation and Papal Diplomacy during the Pontificate of Pius IX (1846–1878)', in E. Lamberts (ed.), *The Black International. L'Internationale noire. 1870–1878*, Kadoc Studies XXIX (Leuven, 2002), 135–77, here 143; Giacomo Martina, *Pio IX (1851–1866)* (Rome, 1986), 22; Hartmut Benz, 'Der Peterspfennig im Pontifikat Pius IX. Initiativen zur Unterstützung des Papsttums (1859–1878)', *Römische Quartalschrift* 90 (1995), 90–109; on the personal charisma of this pope, see Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, II, 22.

²⁷ Pieter de Coninck, 'En Les uit Pruisen. Nederland en de Kulturkampf 1870–1880' (Ph.D. dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1998), 48–9, 51–3; Roger Aubert, *Pie IX* (Paris, 1963), 88–90; Horaist, *Dévotion*, 22–5, 34–6, 43; Altermatt, *Der Weg*, 257–60.

²⁸ Some accounts use the term 'neo-ultramontane' to underline the distinctiveness of the extreme papalist phase of the movement. But since this term is not in universal use and does little to clarify the arguments advanced here, I have done without it. See Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, II, 29–34; Aubert *et al.*, *Church*, 312–15.

²⁹ Letter from Marie de Blair to the Holy See, Paris, 1877 cited in Horaist, *Dévotion*, 52.

³⁰ See, e.g., anon., 'Een feitelijke Ordeel der Wereld', *De Katholiek* 57 (January 1870); on the tendency to equate Pius IX with Christ (with references to the literature), see Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, I, 30.

But if the pope was a ‘martyr’ who embodied the contemporary sufferings of the church, he was also, in the eyes of many, the timeless incarnation of the eternal church. Narratives of suffering and deprivation thus alternated with images of beatific serenity:

He has never seemed to us more beautiful, more grand, more majestic, more radiant with the triple halo of the patriarch, the king and the pontiff [reports the *Correspondance de Genève* on the occasion of the pope’s eightieth birthday]. An air of vigour, of health and even of freshness, made the more remarkable by the serene joy that illuminated his countenance, struck all eyes and reassured all hearts. Beneath his snow-white cap could be seen the even whiter hairs that were traced upon his venerable brow like a diadem of silver, and his smile replied with an expression of unutterable tenderness to the demonstrations of love that his children were bringing to him in abundance.³¹

The effect of such word-pictures was reinforced by evocative lithographic portraits whose mass distribution was facilitated by new techniques in cheap colour reproduction. By these means the ultramontanes conveyed a sense of proximity to the pope’s person and concerns to those millions who would never acquire the means to travel to Rome. The pontiff came to encompass and signify the values for which the church was waging its culture war against the forces of secularisation, and the privations it was suffering as a consequence. The result – in the short term at least – was a drastic personalisation of authority that knew no contemporary parallel and anticipated in some respects the totalitarian cults of the twentieth century.

PRESS AND PUBLICITY

Newspapers and journals were the pre-eminent medium of the ultramontane transformation of European Catholicism. They were used in that sustained assault on contrary positions within the church that we might describe as the ‘long culture war’. The primary task of the ultramontane press was to drive back and marginalise liberal and statist elements within Catholicism. But at the height of the culture wars it was also wielded with great effect against the outer opponents of the New Catholicism. Ultramontane journals framed mordant critiques of liberal regimes and the secular cultures that flourished under them; they supported Catholic politicians and parties and maintained solidarity and morale amongst the Catholic populations. In areas where Catholic associational life was relatively

³¹ Anon., ‘Le 13 Mai’, *Correspondance de Genève*, no. 69 (19 May 1871).

undeveloped, the press could play a crucial consciousness-raising role.³² Most importantly, perhaps, it created a discursive space that transcended national boundaries and nurtured the emergence of Europe-wide networks of communication and solidarity, so that Catholics in one country could – to an ever-increasing extent – be moved by the contemporaneous tribulations of co-religionists in another. However, although the ultramontane press defined itself to some extent by its support for the ascendancy of Rome, it was – with some exceptions – not the compliant organ of papal authority that the curia might have wished for. In this respect, as we shall see, it reflected the cross-currents and internal conflicts generated by Catholic revival and mobilisation.

One of the striking features of the early and mid-nineteenth-century Catholic press was the predominance of ultramontane journals. In the Italian states, the few Catholic titles successfully launched during the Restoration era were mainly of ultramontane inspiration.³³ In France, the single most important journal of Catholic opinion in the 1840s was *L'Univers*, initially founded by Abbé Migne in 1833 for purposes of general edification but subsequently transformed by its new editor-in-chief, Louis Veuillot, into the most combative and influential organ of European ultramontanism.³⁴ In Spain, the 'New Catholic press' of the 1840s – *La Revista Católica* of Barcelona, *El Católico* of Madrid and *La Cruz* of Seville – focused Catholic attention on incidents of government harassment and provided a forum for ultramontane opinion in the parishes.³⁵ In Germany, too, where a detailed survey has been made of the Catholic press in the Restoration era, journals of ultramontane orientation accounted for the lion's share of the ninety-five new titles launched between 1815 and 1847. While the 'liberal' and 'enlightened' sector stagnated or collapsed altogether during the church–state strife of the later 1830s, ultramontane titles proliferated, from ten in 1834 to twenty-five in 1839, thirty in 1844 and thirty-six in 1847.³⁶

These publications were for the most part fairly small enterprises serving a local readership. About half of the German Catholic journals published between 1815 and 1848 produced print-runs of under 1,000.³⁷ Even *L'Univers* had only 1,530 subscribers in 1840; *L'Amico Cattolico*, published in Milan

³² De Coninck, 'Een Les uit Pruisen', 273–9; Winfried Halder, *Katholische Vereine in Baden und Württemberg 1848–1914. Ein Beitrag zur Organisationsgeschichte des südwestdeutschen Katholizismus im Rahmen der Entstehung der modernen Gesellschaft* (Paderborn, 1995), 178; Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain*, 174; Aubert et al., *Church*, 56.

³³ Angelo Majo, *La stampa cattolica in Italia: Storia e documentazione* (Milan, 1992), 15–18.

³⁴ Aubert, *Pie IX*, 273–6; Harris, *Lourdes*, 118–20; Chadwick, *Popes*, 323–5.

³⁵ Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain*, 174.

³⁶ Schneider, *Katholiken*, 52. ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

from 1841 in emulation of *L'Univers*, ran to only 500 copies. But these figures scarcely convey the significance of such publications. The readership of the key ultramontane journals was much larger than the print-run, since individual copies were widely circulated, either informally, or through Catholic reading societies like that of the Thiessingsche Buchhandlung in Münster, which offered access to twenty-one Catholic journals for a yearly subscription of only 3 thalers.³⁸ In addition to publicising ultramontane views on the key issues of the day, the new journals, though locally inspired and founded, helped to consolidate a Europe-wide sense of connectedness and solidarity among ultramontanes in different countries: there was extensive reprinting and translation of articles, and certain prominent issues such as the controversy surrounding the published works of the liberal ultramontane Félicité Lamennais were widely discussed in the Catholic journals of Belgium and the German states.³⁹

Perhaps the most distinctive and significant feature of the ultramontane press was the mixed lay–clerical character both of its personnel and of its readership. Some journals were run by clergymen, but others were independent lay initiatives. Contributing authors often included both priests and laymen, and many editors explicitly aimed to appeal both to clerical readers and to persons from the ‘pious laity’. ‘Laymen have become theologians and theologians have turned into journalists’, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* observed in a report on the Catholic press in 1844.⁴⁰ This element of lay engagement and the mixed constituency that it helped to create were something new. The Catholic press was becoming a force in its own right, capable on the one hand of mobilising lay energies around clerically generated projects, but also on the other of critical public reflection on the activities (or lack thereof) of the hierarchy. This latter function was made explicit by the conservative and ultramontane publicist Johann Baptist Pfeilschifter, editor of the *Katholische Kirchen-Zeitung* (Aschaffenburg), who saw in the Catholic press a ‘voice of the people’ vis-à-vis the pastors of the church.⁴¹ There was clearly enormous potential here for tension with the diocesan authorities, especially in areas where the bishops did not share the views of the ultramontane press. Already in the 1840s there were instances where bishops appealed to the local secular authorities or even to Rome for disciplinary action against ultramontane journals, and such conflicts became more frequent and more intense as the ultramontane

³⁸ Chadwick, *Popes*, 324; Schneider, *Katholiken*, 83.

³⁹ Gerhard Valerius, *Deutscher Katholizismus und Lamennais. Die Auseinandersetzung in der katholischen Publizistik 1817–1854* (Mainz, 1983).

⁴⁰ Cited in Aubert *et al.*, *Church*, 56. ⁴¹ Schneider, *Katholiken*, 55, 67.

movement gathered momentum. In this sense, the growth of the ultramontane press shifted the balance of power between the clergy and the laity in the direction of the latter, introducing a new element of dynamism and instability into Catholic affairs.

Although there were occasional bursts of polemic from parts of the ultramontane press in the 1830s and 1840s, most journals strove to avoid political controversy and focused on religious questions in the narrower sense. The revolutions of 1848 produced a less restrained climate. The lifting of press restrictions in many countries encouraged the launching of new journals and removed some of the constraints on tone and content. More importantly, the secularising and sometimes anticlerical thrust of liberal demands across Europe opened a gap between liberals and ultramontanes that had previously been cloaked by a shared rhetoric of 'liberty' in the face of repressive state measures. In France, for example, as a liberal Catholic camp began to coalesce around the newspaper *L'Ére Nouvelle*, there were polemical blasts against the 'democratic-social' elements in contemporary Catholicism from Veuillot and other Catholic conservatives. In Italy, too, the ultramontane press now issued blanket condemnations of republicanism and nationalism and their fellow-travellers in clerical garb, expressed in a new mordant style exemplified by the writing of Don Giacomo Margotti, editor of the Turin paper *L'Armonia*.⁴² The note of intransigence and polemical sharpness sounded during the months of revolution was to remain a defining feature of much ultramontane publicistic activity.

It was only after 1848, under the pressure of the dramatic expansion in political print which accompanied the revolutions, that the papacy actually developed a broad-circulation press organ of its own. Several factors converged here. From the beginning of his reign, Pius IX was more flexible – if not positive – in his attitude to the press than his predecessor had been, and there were some tentative moves in the direction of a more relaxed press regime within the Papal States. The situation of acute instability created by the revolutions of 1848 brought home the need to correct potentially damaging misperceptions of his political intentions – late in April, for example, he issued an allocution to the cardinals urging them to refute rumours to the effect that he was encouraging the Catholics of Lombardy and Venetia to rise up against the Austrians. This was followed by a formal repudiation of 'all the newspaper articles that want the pope to be president of a new republic of all the Italians'. Later, during his exile in Gaeta, the pontiff

⁴² Full title: *L'Armonia della Religione colla Civiltà*; Majo, *Stampa cattolica*, 31–5.

issued a *motu proprio* urging bishops – for the first time – to defend ‘the truth’ through the press.⁴³

When Carlo Curci, a young Neapolitan Jesuit undergoing training in Rome, proposed that a moderately priced vernacular journal of broad cultural interest be founded to assist the curia in combating directly the spread of revolutionary ideas, the pope was receptive. The proposal was controversial, for the Constitution of St Ignatius forbade any involvement by the order in political affairs. It was opposed for this reason by Curci’s superior, the Jesuit General P. Roothaan, who had also been pressing for a new journal, but envisaged a much less accessible organ devoted to erudite subject matter and published in Latin. Pius IX preferred Curci’s option and even offered to take on the costs of the first issue. The result was the foundation in April 1850 of *Civiltà Cattolica*. Initially published in Naples, the paper was moved to Rome six months later, where it soon boasted a print-run of over 12,000. Considerable effort was invested to maximise the new journal’s public impact: some 120,000 programmes and 4,000 manifestos were distributed, and the first issue was widely announced in the Catholic press.⁴⁴

Civiltà Cattolica was a nominally independent, self-funding enterprise, yet it was produced under the close supervision of the curia and, in particular, of Pius IX himself, who frequently examined the proofs of the journal before publication. As a consequence, *Civiltà Cattolica* came to occupy a unique place in the panorama of the international press as the ‘semi-official voice of the Pope’.⁴⁵ There was a striking parallel here with developments elsewhere in Europe after the revolution. Like many other European sovereigns, Pius IX, having been forced to flee his own capital by a violent republican insurrection in November 1848, emerged from the upheavals of revolution with a heightened sense of the importance of the press and public opinion. Across Europe many regimes responded to this challenge by developing a more proactive, centralised and flexible press policy involving covert financial assistance and editorial manipulation of semi-autonomous press organs for which the epithet ‘semi-official’ – ‘*offiziös*’, ‘*officieux*’, ‘*officioso*’ – was widely used. *Civiltà Cattolica* thus exemplified to some extent the new post-revolutionary climate in European administration. Pius IX’s willingness to engage with public opinion has often been identified as a defining feature of his pontificate. He spoke more often

⁴³ Cited in Chadwick, *Popes*, 75–7.

⁴⁴ Majo, *Stampa cattolica*, 49; Aubert, *Pie IX*, 39; F. Dante, *Storia della ‘Civiltà Cattolica’ (1850–1891). Il laboratorio del Papa* (Rome, 1990), 57–63, 141–52.

⁴⁵ Dante, *Storia della ‘Civiltà Cattolica’*, 66, 67, 71.

impromptu to a greater variety of audiences than any of his predecessors had, and he was the first pontiff to see his speeches edited for publication. Since, with the advent of railways and faster long-distance shipping, a steadily growing mass of devout visitors converged on Rome each year, the pontiff's personal charisma and confidence in his own communicative gifts were of enormous importance in building an awareness of the special claims of the Holy See among European Catholics.

It would be going too far to say that these developments signalled the emergence of a modern papal 'publicity policy'. The pontiff's own views on the press remained deeply equivocal. On the one hand, the encyclical *Inter multiplices*, issued on 21 March 1853, was among the earliest documents of this kind to refer to Catholic journals in a way that implied that these could be of importance to the work of the church.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Pius IX himself remained antipathetic to freedom of the press in principle – in an unsigned document probably dating from 1856, he stressed the right of the government in his own states to take action against journalists who set out to denigrate it, and contrasted the papal regime favourably with 'the unlimited and so harmful freedom of the press that exists in the so-called free countries'.⁴⁷ By contrast with many other European regimes, the Holy See did not establish a centralised 'press bureau' in the immediate aftermath of 1848. No consistent effort was made to supply either clerical or lay activists with assistance in handling the controversies generated by announcements issuing from the Holy See.

The most striking example of this lackadaisical attitude to publicity management was the *Syllabus of Errors* (*Syllabus errorum*) of 1864 with its accompanying encyclical *Quanta cura*. The *Syllabus*, one of the most controversial utterances in the history of the papacy, was a composite, improvised document that was edited by many hands and was hurried to press without the pope's having checked the final version. Substantial parts of it had been cut and pasted wholesale from other documents in which various erroneous views had been condemned by Pius IX or his recent predecessors. The wording of Article 80, for example, which notoriously condemned the notion that the pope should reconcile himself with 'progress, liberalism and civilisation as lately introduced', derived from an earlier document denouncing the secularisation of education in the Kingdom of Piedmont, where it was clear that the reference was specifically to certain anticlerical initiatives. Shorn of their context, such broadly formulated denunciations,

⁴⁶ Martina, *Pio IX (1851–1866)*, 168; Chadwick, *Popes*, 324; the earlier encyclical *Nostris et nobiscum* (1849) had also touched on the positive role of the press; see Majo, *Stampa cattolica*, 23.

⁴⁷ Cited in Martina, *Pio IX (1851–1866)*, 6.

which bore directly upon the great political questions of the day, were guaranteed to provoke a furious response from the liberal press. And yet no guidelines – aside from the intemperate and unfocused text of the accompanying encyclical – were issued on how this troublesome document might be interpreted, justified to the faithful, or presented to the public; nor did the curia make any efforts at damage limitation. It fell to gifted and persuasive publicists like Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans and Bishop Ketteler of Mainz to contextualise and interpret the *Syllabus* in such a way as to reconcile sceptical Catholics to its theses.⁴⁸

It is clear nonetheless that the existence after 1848 of *Civiltà Cattolica* provided the pope with a potent means of influencing public opinion. On 1 June 1867, the journal ran a leading article entitled ‘A New Tribute to Saint Peter’, which argued that, having rendered up their tribute of gold (the Peter’s Pence) and blood (the Zouave volunteer movement), Catholics should now offer the tribute of intellect (*tributo dell’intelletto*). This was to take the form of an oath to expound faithfully and if necessary to the point of martyrdom the infallibility of papal *ex-cathedra* pronouncements.⁴⁹ The article had a remarkable impact, especially in France, where fly-sheets bearing oaths to infallibility were distributed on the streets, and parish priests were pressed to add their signatures to petitions collected by laymen. In retrospect it is evident that this important gambit signalled a transition to concerted work towards the definition of infallibility at the Council of 1870. And yet, appearances notwithstanding, it did not derive from a papal initiative. As Klaus Schatz has shown, the ‘threefold tribute’ was in fact the inspiration of a young Jesuit studying in Rome. The editors adopted the idea and allowed the student (anonymously) to compose the article.⁵⁰ Pius IX subsequently welcomed the sentiments expressed, though he appears also to have been doubtful about whether the time was right for such forthright signals.⁵¹ The editor of *Civiltà*, Matteo Liberatore, later claimed that the function of his journal in the run-up to the Vatican Council had been essentially provocative: his aim was to goad the opponents of the papal

⁴⁸ On preparations for the *Syllabus*, see Frank J. Coppa, *Pius IX: Crusader in a Secular Age* (Boston, 1979), 140–53; Aubert *et al.*, *Church*, 293–9; on the defects of papal publicity management, J. Bachem, *Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Politik der Zentrumspartei. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der katholischen Bewegung, sowie zur allgemeinen Geschichte des neueren und neuesten Deutschland, 1815–1914*, 9 vols. (Cologne, 1927–32), III, 52–3, 61; Chadwick, *Popes*, 176; Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, I, 32; for a similar damage limitation exercise in Austria in 1867, following an intemperate papal condemnation of recent Austrian laws, see Bachem, *Zentrumspartei*, III, 81–2.

⁴⁹ ‘Un nuovo tributo a S. Pietro’, *Civiltà Cattolica* (1867), ser. 6, vol. X, 641–51.

⁵⁰ Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, I, 201–2.

⁵¹ G. G. Franco, *Appunti storici sopra il Concilio Vaticano (1870)*, ed. G. Martina (Rome, 1982), 233 (no. 422).

cause to leave their hiding-places and come out into the open, much as the hunting dog 'raises game, forcing it to pass before the eyes of the hunter'.⁵²

The question of whether the pope himself was involved in starting and steering such initiatives is in any case of secondary importance. For it was precisely the relative informality of papal press management – which allowed enthusiasts across Europe to 'work towards the pope' by anticipating his intentions – that unleashed forces that may well have been suppressed in a more tightly controlled regime. A good example of this principle in operation is the publication in the French press in June 1868 of a personal letter from Pius IX to Archbishop Darboy in Paris, admonishing him in sharp terms for his Gallicanism. It was subsequently revealed that the letter, which was taken up by the ultramontane press and used to scourge the archbishop in public, had been leaked by the Paris nuncio, Mgr Chigi, who had a copy of his own. It is extremely unlikely that this manoeuvre was personally authorised in advance by the pope, who categorically denied any involvement.⁵³ On the other hand, Chigi, himself an enthusiastic ultramontane who had long been an important agent of papal policy in France, will have known that his tactical indiscretion would not be unwelcome in Rome. The power of ultramontane publicity lay precisely in this combination of clarity over certain shared general objectives with a flexible, fuzzy structure in which boundaries of competence and responsibility were blurred. A crucial advantage of this arrangement was that it permitted phases of rapid rhetorical radicalisation, while leaving the pope free to disassociate himself, when this was convenient, from published statements, even when they appeared in *Civiltà Cattolica*.⁵⁴

Only in October 1870, after the seizure of Rome and the surrounding territory by the armed forces of the Kingdom of Italy, was a concerted effort made to steer and coordinate news coverage of the Roman question and of papal issues more generally in the European press. The consequence was the foundation in October 1870 of the *Correspondance de Genève*, a bulletin whose function was to supply the Catholic press internationally with a centrally coordinated news service covering Catholic affairs. It was published between two or three times a week in a French and German

⁵² M. Liberatore, *Il dogma dell'infalibilità pontificia. Dialogo fra un cattolico e un teologo Romano* (Naples, 1870), cited in Schatz, *Vaticanum I*, I, 203.

⁵³ A. B. Hasler, *Pius IX (1846–1878), päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit und I. Vatikanisches Konzil. Dogmatisierung und Durchsetzung einer Ideologie*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1977), I, 18; see also Martina, *Pio IX (1867–1878)*, 154–5.

⁵⁴ Hasler, *Päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit*, I, 45; for an example of the same practice under Leo XIII, see R. Lill (ed.), *Vatikanische Akten zur Geschichte des deutschen Kulturkampfes. Leo XIII. Teil I (1878–1880)* (Tübingen, 1970), doc. 64, 130–1.